

FOOD STAMP CHANGE

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 40888

San Francisco,

CA 94140

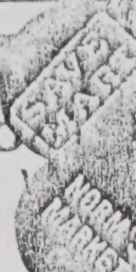
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No. 2

July 1980

FOOD STAMP CHANGE TOKENS: The Time Is Now!

by Jerry F. Schimmel

On January 1, 1979, retail grocers were required to use regular United States coinage to make change for Food Stamp eligible purchases when change amounts came to less than one dollar. Prior to that time shopkeepers had been required to give change in whatever practical form they could work out. Methods were varied and included making pencilled notes on the backs of register receipts, having the cash register print the amounts of credit due, or giving change in the form of store-issued paper scrip or tokens. Paper scrip was probably the most common form of credit. Both the scrip and tokens have been issued in denominations of 1c, 5c, 10c, 25c, and 50c, although not all stores used all five denominations. On return orders of tokens many stores dropped the use of the 1c token because customers felt that it was not worth their while to redeem them.

The 1979 regulation was one of a number of on-again, off-again changes over the past ten years in reference to how Food Stamp change was to be made (See the article in TAMS Journal, Dec. 1972, "Food Stamp Tokens, ..." by Neil Shafer, for information on some of the earlier changes). There had been a Food Stamp program also in the 1930's. Many of the tokens used then are now rarities. During the present program tokens have been used on a nationwide basis, in every state, Puerto Rico, Pacific Island Territories, and perhaps other areas. My recent trip to Puerto Rico suggested to me that the use of tokens is probably even more widespread than on the mainland.

Small merchants seem to have been the primary issuers and their stores are located in poor neighborhoods in the large cities and in small towns. Many owners are minority group Americans or foreign immigrants. For many of them English has been learned only as a second language. It is often difficult to communicate about collector interests to such persons since collecting is so distant from their day-to-day operations.

The time to obtain these tokens is now, before the storekeepers get rid of them. I have encountered several situations in which tokens have either been thrown out or returned to the manufacturer either for recycling (or, as I suspect, to sell to dealers). In one case the tokens have been converted to use as poker chips!

obtained by going store-to-store because they are issued individually daily. Many of these tokens will never reach numismatic distribution channels. That seem to be are those issued by the PLATCO Company in Wisconsin. But there are many others.



The other and more difficult method of obtaining the tokens is by direct contact with shopkeepers. If they are to be found they will have to be hunted down by collectors in towns and cities all over the country. One of the things I want to do is encourage as many collectors to begin this kind of search and obtain as many of them as possible. Then get them into collector channels. They are genuine "Good Fors" and I feel that they reflect another significant period in U.S. economic history. A SPECIAL NOTE: While it is illegal to collect the Food Stamps themselves, it is not illegal to collect the tokens or scrip.

GETTING THE TOKENS

For those collectors who are willing to try their own hunt, here are some of the ways that have worked well for me.

1. Search The Lists

Starting with the December, 1977, issue of the TAMS Journal, look for the mail bid sale lists titled "An Offering of Rare Food Stamp Change Tokens." Check through them for the towns and shops in them which you might want. There are some lists coming from other dealers. Use those. Get information from other collectors. The stores themselves often know of other shops which used tokens, because customers often try to use the tokens of one store in the others. Get the addresses from the telephone books or city directories, and make your own search lists. The hard way to do it is to go from store-to-store asking. There is usually very little return for this kind of effort, but it is possible if you cannot find out about your town from the lists.

2. Make A Face-To-Face Contact

Don't try to deal over the phone. You can always do better explaining things directly to the owner or manager. Bring samples of the tokens along to show, especially if you can show a small collection in your hand. Make sure you talk to the owner or manager. Whatever arrangement you make with an employee is often vetoed by the boss. Many managers will not let employees decide about tokens.

3. Explaining What You Want

Be straightforward. Show the tokens you've brought. Say that you are a collector. Many storekeepers think you want to redeem the tokens, or to redeem some other store's tokens. Some think you are checking on illegal use of Food Stamps. I usually tell them that I know they have used tokens, that I collect them, and that I am willing to pay cash for some of theirs. Then I stop and let it sink in for a moment. At this point they usually have questions and start asking you. I usually let them do so. Try to avoid talking to them during "rush hour", since if they become annoyed with you the chances of your getting tokens are reduced. (continued on page 4)

Fixed price FSC Token sales list. Tokens are mostly California, but there are also some from Missouri, Nevada, and Puerto Rico. Write for a free copy. Jerry F. Schimmel, P.O. Box 40888, San Francisco, CA 94140. Many new stores.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The theme of this issue is to go out and find the tokens at their issuing sources, that is at the stores that have used them. The reason for my feeling this way is that the major numismatic source of FSC Tokens and Scrip at the present time, Paul Cunningham (P.O. Box 1, Tecumseh, MI 49286), has mostly only three to four sets from any one store on his mail bid sales. He does have more of some others on his fixed price lists. Further confirmation of the limited supply of FSC material comes from Neil Shafer of Racine, Wisconsin from an April 4 letter:

"(The story goes) ... back to the beginning of Phase 3 (of the Food Stamp Program - Ed) in March, 1972, when Personalized Plastics really got heavily involved in the token business. After phone calls and lengthy letters explaining what I wanted, they started to save an archive for me of a few sets of each run they made in these tokens. I went there in 1976 at which time they released to my custody most of the sets now on the market, so to answer your question about the availability of those sets - there isn't any from where they're being sold or from me either, so they are for the most part legitimately rare."

The FOOD STAMP CHANGE NEWSLETTER is Edited and Published quarterly by Jerry F. Schimmel and the subscription for July 1980 through June 1981 is \$3.85.

Subscribers can submit one free 30 word ad each issue and which must be re-submitted for each issue. Full page ads cost \$7.50, half-page ads are \$4, and quarter-page ads are \$2.50. Copy must be submitted by June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15, and March 15 to be published. Full page material submitted must be 11x7 1/4 inches. Newsletters will be mailed before the Tenth of the following month.

My impression is that many of Neil's tokens went to the Christiansen and Stone dealership in Southern California, and were later remaindered to Paul Cunningham. Paul had also picked up a large accumulation from the estate of the late Jerry Bates. I recall in the early 1970's that Jerry had me going out and hunting for scrip, none of which I kept (of course!). At this point in time many of Paul's pieces are the only ones that will ever be seen in numismatic hands. Which leads me to my main point.

The only other resources beside Paul are other collectors like you, me, Herman Boreker, and Dr. Zamora. We have gone out and spent hours, gasoline, and dollars to dig the tokens and scrip out of the woodwork. Many tokens and scrip are still out there sitting in cigar boxes or drawers behind the counters. But it is getting late. I am increasingly finding that many stores have thrown out or destroyed their tokens, and Paul's will be the only ones left. Look for my ad elsewhere for FOOD STAMP CHANGE TOKEN STORES which I made up as a nationwide list of stores by town and state that have used tokens, that is, those known to date. My major purpose in publishing it is to give collectors a list of stores along with tips on how to approach store owners to help them on their way. In this way many more pieces will be made available to collectors if they are found.

On Collecting Food Stamps Themselves

Several correspondents have asked me about this. As most of you know it is illegal. For myself I cannot encourage any reader to collect them and I certainly cannot use the newsletter to do so. I personally sympathize with those who have such interests and feel that they should be as collectible as stamps or currency. For me it means that as a policy I will not take any ads for the trading or selling of Food Stamps nor will I be publishing Xeroxed or other descriptions of them. I hope you can all understand my feelings on this issue. However, and I have checked this with the Department of Agriculture, the Food Stamp booklet covers can be collected. In fact I have a partial copy of one included in the new logo.

On Forming a Club or Organization

Inquiries continue to come in about a club. As I mentioned in the Promtion Issue my feeling is that most efforts should be directed to local organizations and to token and scrip finding. An awful lot of good collecting time can get swallowed up in the mechanics and politics of running a big organization. However, accompanying this issue is a Subscriber's List with names, addresses, and interests, so that persons interested in pulling together an organization can write to one another. I will assist any such group by publishing its news. If a group wishes to take over the newsletter, I will be glad to negotiate.

4. Possible Responses From The Owners or Managers

"Yes, I have a lot that I will sell. How much are you paying?"

(I have been offering \$5.00 per 200 regardless of denomination. Sometimes I have gotten them for higher or lower prices.)

"The Manager (or Owner) isn't here," or "I have to check with my partner."

(Try to find out what time he or she will be there, or when the partner will be communicated with. In this case you might risk a phone call since you have established yourself. However, if you haven't seen the boss, you probably shouldn't.)

"We threw them out," or "We sent them back to the factory."

(Be brave, life has its disappointments.)

"I'm still getting them back from my customers."

(Many shopkeepers are still redeeming the tokens from their customers even though they are forbidden by regulation from putting them into circulation. Consequently, if they sell tokens to collectors for a discount, they are opening themselves to having you bring them back for redemption at face value. You should not object to this since it is a realistic business concern. Ask if they might be willing to sell later. Or if all you want is one set for your collection, ask if they will accept a purchase for face value (at the most 91¢). Most will do that.

You can suggest that they post a sign indicating that redemption of the tokens will end by a specific date. After this kind of contact you can certainly make later contacts by telephone.)

"No, I do not wish to sell."

(Just say thanks and leave. I usually do not give up until somebody says "no", or I get some tokens. To get to either conclusion sometimes takes a number of contacts.)

5. Other Tips

Keep in mind that the storekeepers are the best leads to other stores with tokens. Many grocers have accepted other stores' tokens for the good will it creates with their customers. If you are lucky enough to reach one of these shops, and the owner is in a selling mood, it can be very rewarding indeed. Usually in any lot you buy you will find at least one or two pieces from other shops. You eventually get a sense that you have run across all of the stores in a locality that have used tokens.

I make it a practice to buy up the total remaining stock if I can. Here in the San Francisco area I have paid up to \$12.50 on a total purchase. I paid \$20.00 in Puerto Rico for 2000! It is only in this way that you can run across earlier and different token types issued by the same store, errors, varieties, and pieces from other shops (often shopkeepers will give you the tokens of another store).

ED: I prepared this article in August, 1979, hoping to publish it elsewhere with no luck. There are some things that have changed or about which I have changed my mind. Paper scrip was probably the most common form of change given on the mainland, certainly not in Puerto Rico. I have no information on the recycling of tokens, but I think that my conclusion about their being sold to dealers is wrong. Under point #2 I think that it is possible now to use the telephone especially at long distances. But you should still speak with the managers.

SOME RESULTS OF FINDING YOUR OWN TOKENS AND SCRIP

The following is a long excerpt from a letter sent to me by subscriber Dr. Zamora of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. The letter has been interspersed with Xeroxes of a number of english and spanish language reverses provided by another subscriber, Mr. Jose Andreu of Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. He sent the Xeroxes in response to the lead article in the Promotion Issue. Other token types are shown as well.

Dr. Francisco J. Zamora Pamiés

MEDICO - BIQUIATRA

APARTADO 119

MAYAGUEZ, PUERTO RICO - 00700

TELEFONOS

OFICINA: 832-5378

RESIDENCIA: 832-4307

April 15, 1980
Jerry F. Schimmel
San Francisco, CA 94140

Dear Mr. Schimmel,

"I wish to advance some information about the FSC tokens of Puerto Rico. You might wish to publish some of it in the next newsletter. I have been buying the remaining stocks from stores all over the island for about a year. My personal collection contains about 2000 different tokens and about 100 different scrip pieces. I have about 125,000 tokens in duplicate, stored in the original bags and boxes waiting for thorough study and clarification. Have a lot of work to do with them before I can write a list. ... The collection includes tokens from over 350 stores. Most of the FSC tokens of Puerto Rico were made by the Plasco, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, manufacturers. They come with several different reverses in English and Spanish as you described in the Newsletter.

There are many other plastic tokens not made by Plasco - small, medium, and large with white, black, silver or golden letters and numerals. There is a big "wooden dollar" plastic type used by several stores in the southern Ponce area (Ed; a large city in southwest P.R.). There is one from the northwest of the island with a unique form like a daisy and very small in size, but with all five values - 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50. There is only one metal set as far as I know made by a chain store, American-owned. A few of the southern stores used wooden nickels with both the indian and buffalo reverses. Some are wooden nickels without the traditional reverse, just the name of the store on one side and a blank reverse or a reverse with only numerals.



32mm



32mm

Scrip was not used as much as tokens. However, there are many in different ... colors and size of paper and cardboard. In the south many stores used a bill that is similar to the "Monopoly" money, printed on one side with the name of the store and values of 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 50. Many read in Spanish, others in English, some with part-Spanish and part-English. Others were crudely made by small store owners on pricing tags - handstamped with the store name and value.

Some are well-printed with the reproduction of a Lincoln Cent and a Washington quarter. Some were made in addition to the tokens and with the same design.

About "freaks." I have about fifty; some extremely overinked print; some badly off-centered. I have some with the obverse printed on both sides on tokens that would be normally blank on the reverse. Also I have some of the Plasco with blank reverses or blank obverses. In this latter case there is no way to know the store name. Another Plasco piece has an obverse and reverse printed on the same side and a different value reverse on the other side!

I have also found something unique, a mule! One has an obverse with a supermarket name and reverse with another supermarket name. The two stores are big and probably used large quantities of tokens. Normally the tokens of these two stores have blank reverses. The stores belong to different municipal-



32mm

Now Available!

FOOD STAMP CHANGE TOKEN STORES

by Jerry F. Schimmel

A one hundred page listing of more than 4000 stores nationwide in 2700 towns, 50 states, two territories and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Compiled from draft catalogs, mail bid lists, personal collections, etc. Use it to go find your own tokens, as a checklist for your collections, or to write your own catalogs.

\$7.50 postpaid to subscribers.
(\$8.50 to non-subscribers)

Send check or money order to Jerry F. Schimmel, P.O. Box 40888, San Francisco, CA 94140.

ZAMORA (concluded)



28mm

ities (ED: In Puerto Rico the word is "municipios", analogous to mainland U.S. counties. I do not entirely understand the "municipio"-town relationship in P.R. Maybe some reader could help out there.) I will send complete information on my tokens when it is ready. Hope to keep in touch with you and the other FSC Token Newsletter subscribers.

Happy hunting!

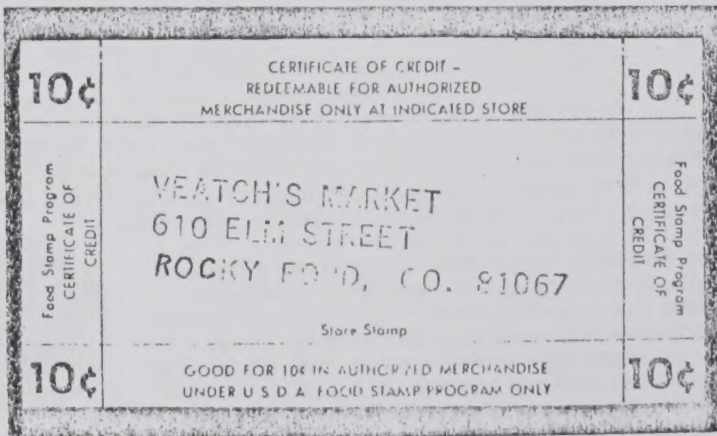
Sincerely,

Dr. F.J. Zamora P.

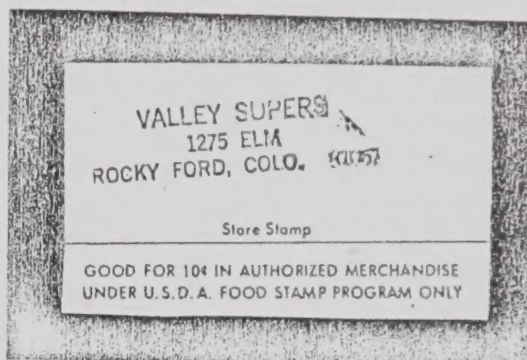
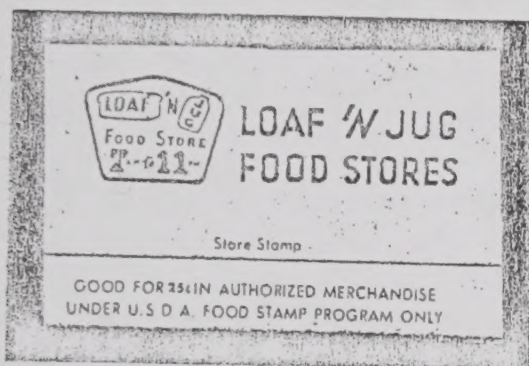
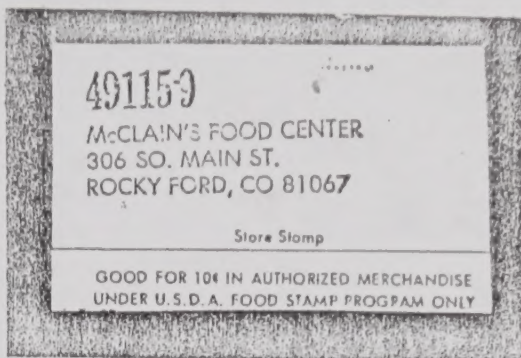
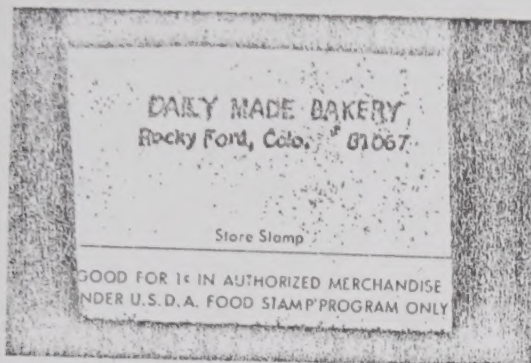
P.S. I would like some California tokens, maybe a collection. Also from anywhere in the USA (not only California). (ED: anybody out there game?)

FOOD STAMP SCRIP OF ROCKY FORD, COLORADO

Another collector who has gone out hunting is from Colorado. Herman Boraker sent in several items from his home town. He sent some more, but those and a story will wait for a later issue. The type of scrip shown here is a stock item which comes in the five values. It is a $4\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ inch card. The 1¢ is light brown, the 5¢ is pink, 10¢ light green, 25¢ salmon, and the 50¢ goldenrod.



In the batch I received from Mr. Doraker there were five imprints on this stock series as shown above and below. Veatch's was in purple rubberstamped ink, McClain's was red, and the others black. The Loaf 'N Jug was the only one printed. There are several other types of Loaf 'N Jug imprints, but I will show those later.



For those interested I have made up a list of persons who received sample news-letter copies but who, by June 15, had not sent in a subscription. There are about 50+ names from all over. Puerto Rican collectors should be especially interested since a large number of inquiries came from there. It is available for 60¢ in stamps.

THANKS go to several periodicals and organizations for publicizing the news-letters: The Numismatist, Coin World, Numismatic News, El Mundo (Puerto Rico), Scrip Talk (of the Coal Mine Scrip Collector's group), METCA, and if I have left any out, please correct me. If it hadn't been for these publications, I would not be here writing this.

Here's a sample sent in by Len Roosmalen of Middleton, WI. See his ad.



MAVERICKS/ FICHAS DE LUGARES DESCONOCIDOS

Identifications

2. Mt. View Food Centers
Antioch and Brentwood, Calif.
Identified by J. Schimmel
3. Parkview IQA and Affiliated Stores
Cincinnati, Ohio.
Identified by Neil Shafer

Please send more to be identified. Food Stamp items only, please.

Spanish-Language Phrases

I have received such an overwhelming number of inquiries from Puerto Ricans that it behooves me to use a few well-placed spanish phrases. I hope there are no great objections to this practice. I am not Hispanic by origin (mostly German), but have traveled widely in Latin-America. Spanish lessons to come later.

The American Numismatic Association is looking for Food Stamp Change Tokens and Scrip. Do you have duplicates? Why not donate one or a set to the ANA Museum for posterity? Write ANA Museum P.O. Box 2366, Colorado Springs, CO 80901. (ED: such donations may also be tax deductible at 50¢ per token. I plan to ask about this.)

Wanted. Paper scrip from ALL STATES and TERRITORIES, one from each state. J. Schimmel, P.O. Box 40888, San Francisco CA 94140.

Will trade COLORADO Food Stamp Change for OTHER STATES on equal basis. I have 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, 50¢. Herman L. Borker, P.O. Box 204, Rocky Ford, CO 81067.

Want different ALASKA town tokens in trade for PUERTO RICO tokens. Also want PUERTO RICO. Pablo A. Rodriguez, Buzon 3131 Uriken, Morovis, PR 00717.

ALASKA tokens and scrip. I'll buy, trade or exchange listings. Ron Benice, 25 Stewart Place, Mount Kisco, NY 10549.

Cataloguing CALIFORNIA tokens. Need any listings that have not appeared in TAMS Journal or Paul Cunningham lists. Duane Felsel, P.O. Box 1302, Los Altos, CA 94022.

Wanted Food Stamp Tokens from FLORIDA. Will buy or trade. N.R. Mack, P.O. Box 325, Goose Creek, SC 29445.

Buying - HAWAII Food Stamp Tokens and Scrip, Dog Tags. Also anything related to or depicting railways - cards, stamps, woods, photos, brochures, etc. Will reply to all offers and refund postage. Kazuma Oyama, P.O. Box 327, Wahiawa, HI 96786.

Will trade other tokens for KANSAS Food Stamp Credit Tokens. Also want Sport Schedule Tokens. J.W. Baum, 3101 N. Arkansas Ave., Wichita, KS 67204.

Interested in obtaining FSC Tokens from MICHIGAN only. Also MICHIGAN medals, tokens, wooden money, scrip, dog tags, buttons, etc. George C. Stenson, 9659 North River Road, Algonac, MI 48001.

Wanted any Food Stamp Change in complete sets from MICHIGAN. Also wood FSC from ANY STATE. Tokens must be clean and unbroken. Steve Penzes, 9312 West Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48209.

Special - THREE STATE NAMES on each token! Mallory's Grocery - Bensonville NEW YORK and NEW HAMPSHIRE and OHIO. Set of five. Only \$3 postage paid or trade. Tom Conklin, Box 440, Rutherford NJ 07070.

NEW JERSEY Food Stamp Tokens wanted. Also all other NJ medals, tokens, wood nickels. Please write. Gary Patterson R.D. 3, 1108 Northampton Blvd Toms River, NJ 08753.

Wanted. All NEW JERSEY Food Stamp Tokens and Scrip. Also collect any other NJ items, and all prison exonerations. Jerry Zera, Box 248, Brick, NJ 08723.

Wanted. Food Stamp Tokens from WEST VIRGINIA or OHIO. Charles Ross, P.O. Box 491, Spencer, WV 25276.

Will trade 5 different transportation tokens (my choice) for any Food Stamp Change Tokens. An extra TT given for each OHIO token that I need for my collection. Sam Ruggeri, P.O. Box 145 Canton, OH 44701.

For Sale - a 200 piece collection of PUERTO RICO FSC Tokens. \$250 or your offer. Also have plantation tokens and Puerto Rico Indian relics. Luis A. Rodriguez, P.O. Box 6262, Ponce, PR 00731.

Wanted. FSC Tokens of PUERTO RICO only, singles, sets, multiples. Can sell some of my duplicates. Dr. F.J. Zamora Box 119, Mayaguez, PR 00708.

Will trade Coal Mine Scrip (metal) for FSC Tokens I need, especially SOUTH CAROLINA and VIRGINIA. Dean H. Davis, Rt. 2, Box 118, Rockersville, VA 22968.

Wanted - VIRGINIA FSC Tokens ONLY. No coupons. Have no traders, will have to buy. Page Mann, 484 Catesby Ln., Williamsburg, VA 23185.

Sets of 5 plastic FSC Tokens from U-Sav Foods, MADISON, WISCONSIN. Trade even for different tokens or \$2 post paid. Len Roosmalen, 6801 University Ave., Middleton, WI 53562.

Subscribers are entitled to a free 30-word ad each issue. The ad must be re-submitted for each issue.

Subscriptores pueden poner a anuncios clasificados de 30 palabras gratis cada edicion. Debe ponerlos por cada edicion. El editor puede traducirlos de español a ingles.

Wanted to buy - Theresienstadt Bank notes (concentration Camp Money). Also other camps. Sheldon Kanerman, P.O. Box 231, Tuckerton, NJ 08087.

Wanted PUERTO RICO. Have several types to trade. Write in Spanish, if you can. Jose B. Andrau, Apartado 22845, Est. Universidad, Rio Piedras, PR 00931.

I have a few of the rolls from the old way that they used to give change in tokens. I would like to exchange these for some other stores across the country. Frank S. Burke, 4 Bradford Rd. Lynn, MA 01904.